It Hasn't Gone Away You Know: Irish Republican Violence in the Post-Agreement Era

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After a period of relative silence, Ireland's often-troubled province of Ulster again made international headlines when, on 2 April 2011, a police man was killed in a car bomb blast in Omagh, County Tyrone. So-called 'dissident' republicans were immediately blamed for the attack. Constable Ronan Kerr, a new Catholic recruit to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), was only 25-years old. He was the second member of the force killed by Irish republicans opposed to the island's nascent peace process since the PSNI came into being in 2001.

For those outside of Ireland, Constable Kerr's murder was a grim reminder that Northern Ireland's 'peace' ushered in by paramilitary ceasefires in 1994 and a multi-party/international political agreement in 1998, was far from perfect. Closer to home, however, the deliberate targeting of a young Catholic officer delivered an explicit message to the wider Catholic/Nationalist community in the North. The message was simple: Northern Ireland's reformed police force was still deemed unacceptable to militant republicans (it was still an armed wing of the British State) and those who joined it did so at their own risk.

Two years prior to this attack, Sappers Mark Quinsey and Patrick Azimkar – soldiers with the 38th Engineer Regiment – were shot dead outside Massereene Barracks in Antrim. Again, a period of relative silence had been shattered; again, 'dissident' republicans were blamed for the fatalities. It had been over a decade since British Army personnel had been killed in Northern Ireland. The attack, which shocked many both at home and abroad, prompted the likes of David McKittrick, a well-respected and seasoned reporter from Belfast, to ask '[i]f we are at peace, why are soldiers still dying?'[1]

To make matters worse, the day McKittrick's opinion piece appeared in *the Independent*, a police officer was shot dead in Craigavon, Co. Armagh. Forty-eight year-old Stephen Carroll had spent nearly twenty five years as a policeman and was planning his retirement. Like Constable Ronan Kerr, Carroll was a Catholic but in this case his religious affiliation mattered

little to his assassins. Those who gunned him down simply noted: 'As long as there is British involvement in Ireland, these attacks will continue'.[2]

'Mainstream' Republicans?

The Irish Republican Army (IRA) – aka the Provisional IRA (or Provos) – has been on ceasefire for over a decade. It formally called an end to its armed campaign in July 2005 and has 'decommissioned' (i.e. destroyed or made unusable) its vast arsenal of weapons. This was the guerrilla or terror organisation that most are familiar with; this is the organisation which waged a 30-year campaign of violence in pursuit of Irish reunification. As once proclaimed in graffiti and in the murals on gable walls in Belfast, Derry and beyond, the Provisional IRA arose 'out of the ashes' of the civil unrest which erupted across the Northern Ireland in August 1969.[3] The 'new' paramilitary group – a product of a split in the Republican Movement – was founded, in part, by disgruntled IRA veterans from the 1940s and 50s. Its founders – then 'dissidents' themselves – were quick to establish their claim as the true inheritors of the republican mantle by seeking out the blessings of the only surviving member of the 1921 Second Dáil.[4] They were also quick to prove themselves (particularly in Belfast) as the political and sectarian turbulence mounted.

Initially, the IRA claimed the role of defenders of the North's minority Catholic community. Within a few short years, however, it went on the offensive, unleashing some of the worst violence the 'Troubles' would ever see. In 1972, the Provisional IRA was responsible for over 200 killings and played a major role in bringing down the local Stormont government (thus ushering in direct rule from London).[5] Still, the Movement's oft declared 'year of victory' never materialised and by the mid 1970s the Provos settled for a long war of attrition against British forces. The killing continued, but little seemed to change.

In the early 1980s, republicans formally entered into the electoral arena. While this move later helped transform modern Irish republicanism and move it away from political violence, this possibility was originally rubbished by key republican strategists. 'If Sinn Féin were to win every election it contested,' argued future Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness, 'it would still not get an agreement on British withdrawal'.[6] Publicly, McGuinness and his comrades still championed the 'disciplined revolutionary armed struggle' of the IRA.[7] Indeed, as Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams later put it: 'The tactic of armed struggle is of primary

importance because it provides a cutting edge. Without it the issue of Ireland would not even be an issue'.[8] But things changed.

The following decade saw some of the worst atrocities associated with the Troubles: the Teebane massacre, Warrington, the Shankill bombing, the Greysteel killings, and Loughlinisland.[9] The period was also marked by a sharp increase in pro-state violence with Loyalist paramilitary groups out killing their sworn enemies. No paramilitary organisation operating in the North appeared close to calling a ceasefire. Thus, those not privy to behind the scenes negotiations were caught off guard by the IRA's August 1994 ceasefire announcement.

While there are still those within republican circles who believe that an IRA bombing campaign in England brought the British government to the negotiating table, IRA 'spectaculars' such as the bombing of London's Baltic Exchange or Bishopsgate (both carried out in April 1993) were rarities in an otherwise lacklustre guerrilla/terrorist campaign. The truth was that 'the IRA had been heavily infiltrated by informers and was subject to a successful strategy of containment by the British security services'.[10] There was also an admission by senior republican strategists that Sinn Féin's electoral vote had peaked and was unlikely to grow as long as the IRA waged its long war of attrition.

A certain kind of *realpolitik* was coming to bear on a generation of Irish militants who, in some cases, had been involved in republican politics since the late 1960s. To this end, the IRA and its political wing have embraced what is often referred to as 'the Irish peace process'. While many of their long-time critics argue that this means that the 'men of violence' have come in from the cold, the leadership of the Republican Movement simply says that 'a democratic and peaceful alternative to armed struggle' has now been created to advance their objectives.[11] Clearly, however, not all Irish republicans agree with the strategic, tactical and, indeed, ideological shifts now championed by the Provisionals.

'Who Are the Dissidents?'[12]

Brendan Behan, the late Dublin playwright, is credited as having said that the first item on any republican agenda is the split. To be sure, the Republican Movement has a long history of splits – as noted earlier the Provisionals themselves are the product of one.[13] Nevertheless, for nearly 30 years the Provisionals maintained a rather high level of discipline and loyalty within their ranks. While there are those who broke with the Movement long before the advent of the current peace process, the only

significant split occurred in 1986 when Sinn Féin changed its policy on abstention towards Leinster House (i.e. the Dublin parliament).[14] However, from the mid-90s onwards the peace process has produced a number of deep divisions within Irish republicanism.

To be sure, the Irish peace process has required a great many compromises and has seriously challenged traditional republican thought. For some long-time activists, these compromises have been unacceptable and represent a betrayal of their cause. Yet, as one of Sinn Féin's most articulate and consistent republican critics has argued, the party 'has managed its [supposed] abandonment of all republican credentials sufficiently slowly to ensure that those who in turn have abandoned [Sinn Féin] did so slowly as well'.[15] Indeed, he compares this process to the 'shedding of leaves' as opposed to the 'breaking of branches'. But more and more leaves are now falling.

Since the signing of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement in 1998, Sinn Féin has often faced opposition at the polls from former comrades opposed to its new trajectory. Other republican activists have published articles, journals and even books which offer a critique of the Movement and of Ireland's unfolding peace process. Until recently, these dissenting voices have been rather isolated or quickly marginalised: silenced.[16] Nevertheless, it is not the political or intellectual 'dissidents' who are deemed to pose the greatest threat to the North's new status quo.[17]

On the eve of the attack outside Massereene Barracks, the then Chief Constable of the PSNI (Sir Hugh Orde) 'confirmed that the level of threat from dissident republican terrorism [. . .] [was] the highest since he became chief constable' in 2002.[18] Yet many outside of Northern Ireland were – and still are – unaware of who exactly are the 'dissidents' and why they continue with their armed campaigns.

Continuity IRA

Nearly two years after the Provisional IRA called its ceasefire, the Continuity IRA (CIRA) announced its presence – or broke its silence – by issuing a statement which announced: 'We are neither Official nor Provisional and rejecting reformism we remain revolutionary as the true *Óglaigh na hÉireann*, Irish Republican Army'.[19] Not many heeded this warning until nearly six months later when the Continuity IRA bombed a hotel in Enniskillen.[20] It was described as 'the first major bomb attack [. . .]

since the Provisionals' unilateral ceasefire of August 1994 and damage was estimated to be between £2 - 3 million'.[21]

Unlike other 'dissident' groupings, this new paramilitary group was not a product of the peace process. The roots of the Continuity IRA can be traced back to the Republican Movement's first significant split in the mid-1980s. When Sinn Féin changed its policy of abstention towards Leinster House, a number of republican traditionalists walked out of the party conference in protest. This small group (who also sought out the blessings of the only surviving member of the 1921 Second Dáil) reconstituted itself as Republican Sinn Féin but senior members of the new party were warned by their former comrades not to form a competing armed group. While this warning was ignored, paradoxically it took a peace process for the CIRA to make its first public appearance.

Nearly thirteen years later, the Continuity IRA claimed responsibility for what one republican newspaper referred to as 'the shooting dead of British colonial policeman, Stephen Carroll'.[22] Though the group had long been targeting both police and British military personnel, this was their first 'hit'. The Continuity IRA has also been responsible for a number of shootings, bombings (mainly of commercial targets) and punishment beatings. It continues to recruit and seek weapons but internal power-struggles are reported to plague the organisation.

Real IRA

While the Continuity IRA may be one of the oldest 'dissident' groupings, the so-called Real IRA (RIRA) is perhaps the best known 'dissident' paramilitary organisation in Ireland. This, in part, is due to its role in the Omagh bombing in 1998. Omagh, which killed 29 and injured over 200, was the worst single atrocity linked to the Troubles. Such was the horror and outrage over this attack that the Real IRA – an organisation not even a year old at the time – soon announced a ceasefire. By early 2000, however, the Real IRA was back in business.

The Real IRA emerged in late 1997 after a number of senior Provisional IRA men resigned from the paramilitary group's leadership. Men such as Michael McKevitt – now serving a 20 year sentence in Portlaoise Prison – objected to the Provo ceasefire and the nature of the unfolding 'peace process'.[23] The group is frequently linked to the 32 County Sovereignty Committee (now known as the 32 County Sovereignty Movement.) Initially the Committee saw itself as a pressure group within Sinn Féin and was made up of activists 'who were finding themselves increasingly

silenced due to their open concerns at the direction which the party was being led following revelations of Britain's latest proposals for 'peace' in Ireland'.[24] They were soon expelled from the organisation.

The Real IRA is the only 'dissident' group to have launched a bombing campaign in England. Though the campaign was short-lived, a rocket-propelled grenade attack on MI6 headquarters in London made international headlines. Closer to home, the Real IRA has been described as being 'responsible for a ruthless and intensive campaign of violence directed mainly against the PSNI'.[25] This has included a number of shootings and attempted bombings of police stations across the North. The Real IRA was also behind the Massereene Barracks attack which left two soldiers dead.

Óglaigh na hÉireann

As was the case with the Provisional IRA, both the Continuity IRA and Real IRA have had to battle with informers and the many other counter-terror/counter-insurgency tactics available to the State's security forces. The relative success of the latter has, ironically, lead to the formation of a third 'dissident' paramilitary grouping. Between 2005 and 2006, an armed organisation simply calling itself *Óglaigh na hÉireann* (ONH) – Gaelic for soldiers or volunteers of Ireland – was founded. According to those involved, ONH was a product of talks amongst republicans disillusioned with the peace process *and* the state of anti-agreement (Belfast/Good Friday Agreement) militarism.

Óglaigh na hÉireann (ONH) has quickly become one of the more active paramilitary organisations in Northern Ireland. A full year before Constable Ronan Kerr was killed in an under-car, booby-trap bomb, ONH targeted Constable Peadar Heffron in a similar type of attack. Heffron survived but 'would later have his leg amputated and bowel removed'.[26] The group, which (unlike others) has no political front, has also been behind a number of bombings and attempted bombings of police stations, army barracks, court houses, etc.

When Constable Ronan Kerr lost his life to an under-car, booby-trap bomb, it was hardly surprising that *Ógliagh na hÉireann* were suspected.[27] However, a statement was later issued by an allegedly new paramilitary group which claimed the attack and promised others. According to the statement:

> The will of Irish republicans to resist the forced occupation and partitioning of our country has not been defeated. Irish republicans have continued to organise against the British presence in our country. We continue to do so under the name of the Irish Republican Army. We are the IRA.[28]

But this IRA has yet to strike again.

What do They Want? Why Now?

Writing in the *Irish News*, columnist Brian Feeney noted how 'the slogans [of the Republican Movement] changed repeatedly in the 1990s [. . .] [until] finally what the leaders said would never happen did indeed happen'.[29] Though referring to the decommissioning of weapons and the standing down of 'the Army,' Feeney could just have easily been speaking to other concerns raised by republican activists. For some long-time supporters of the movement, the acceptance of, for example, the 'unionist veto' or support for the PSNI has been a bridge too far.[30] Others are uneasy about the relationships some Sinn Féin politicians have developed with former political enemies. And then there is the growing credibility gap between what the Movement says is possible and what actually *is* possible. For example, as late as 2003, Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness claimed a united Ireland was achievable by 2016 – the centenary of the 1916 Uprising.[31]

While many republicans simply 'walked away quietly having given the best years of their lives to a movement they no longer recognised. Some did not walk away quietly and became what are now called republican dissidents'.[32] All of the 'dissident' republican organisations described thus far share a common lineage, i.e., they split from the Provisional IRA. To varying degrees, their statements tend to echo what the Provos once said in the days long before the peace process – in the days before pragmatism trumped long held republican principles. The Continuity IRA, given its links with Republican Sinn Féin, might sound a bit more fundamentalist in its language and is inclined to make more references to the past. The Real IRA and their political sympathisers often speak of the need for a 'restoration of Irish sovereignty' (which has never existed).[33] And in the first interview ONH gave to the *Belfast Telegraph*, the group said of its objectives: 'A 32 county democratic socialist republic. Brits out is simply not good enough'.[34] Still, none of this is all that new.

None of these groups are particularly sophisticated in their political thinking. Most of the Movement's best known and experienced political

activists have remained loyal to the Sinn Féin leadership and the more sophisticated political thinkers amongst the 'dissident' crowd – the likes of Anthony McIntyre, Tommy McKearney, etc. – tend to eschew militarism. Nevertheless, those sympathetic towards/active in any one of the 'new' IRAs are often correct in identifying Sinn Féin's many ideological u-turns. They maintain that their politics (such as they are) have not changed and for this very reason these uncompromising voices are quick to point out that it is their erstwhile comrades who are the dissidents. Yet, anti-Agreement republicans are unlikely to lose the tag 'dissident'. Instead, they are often painted as 'unreconstructed' republicans who are against 'peace' and are stuck in the past.[35]

Of course, ideological concerns have not been the only factor in influencing or fostering the growth of 'dissident' republicanism. The North's promised peace dividend has delivered for some, but not for others. In July 2010, after a heavy bout of rioting in Belfast's Ardoyne district, the social affairs correspondent for *The Guardian* newspaper noted that:

> For all the investment of the post-Good Friday years and the political transformation, the parts of Northern Ireland you are reading about are among the most deprived in the UK. In some parts of north and west Belfast, unemployment is rampant (and was even during the boom), while the same areas are routinely at the bottom of almost every index for deprivation and exclusion.[36]

Such realities have prompted even the current British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to acknowledge that radicalization – particularly of young people – 'could not be countered just by policing [. . .] [but that it] had also to be tackled economically'.[37]

One year on from the Ardoyne riots, serious violence again erupted in the North's largest city. 'Petrol bombs, fireworks, bottles and bricks were among items thrown at police during [some] [. . .] of the worst violence in east Belfast for many years'.[38] While much of the disorder was blamed on rogue elements in the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), 'dissident' republican gunmen fired on police during the second night of rioting. Once community tensions had died down, issues of unemployment and general social deprivation were again raised as contributing factors. But while poverty has always been a factor in fuelling violence in Northern Ireland, hopes of any economic respite against the backdrop of the current global recession is highly unlikely.

Another often overlooked reason for the heightened 'dissident' republican threat is, quite simply, that the Provisional IRA has left the stage. In July 2005, more than seven years after the signing of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, IRA Volunteer Séanna Walsh appeared on a DVD and read out a statement which effectively disbanded the paramilitary organisation. For over a decade, the Provos had been dealing with dissent – or silencing dissenters – within the wider republican/nationalist community. This they did with the tacit approval of both the London and Dublin governments. Their methods included social ostracisation, whispering campaigns or even outright threats. On occasion, IRA Volunteers have kidnapped supposed 'dissidents' (they were caught red-handed in February 2004.) It is also alleged that the group were behind the assassination of prominent Real IRA man Joseph O'Connor in 2000.[39] Such sanctions are no longer an option.

What is to be Done?

When the 'Troubles' first erupted, British Home Secretary Reginald Maulding referred to an 'acceptable level of violence' in Northern Ireland.[40] Maulding did not foresee the complete defeat of the Provisional IRA, but hoped that its activities could be greatly contained. This was said in 1971 – a year in which nearly 200 people died as a result of the North's civil unrest (86 died at the hands of the IRA).[41] Understandably, Maulding's remark angered many (particularly in the Unionist community) but in today's context such a notion might be far less controversial.

In the weeks and months leading up to the fatal attack on Constable Ronan Kerr, government and security sources were expressing their concerns over the rise in 'dissident' republican activity in Northern Ireland. Still, as noted in one of the last reports drafted by the Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC), one should 'keep things in perspective'.[42] After all, in terms of weapons, money, personnel and support the present dissident campaign in no way matches the range and tempo of the PIRA campaign of the Troubles.[43] It is highly unlikely that it ever will.

None of this means one should be complacent in the face of on-going republican violence. No State tolerates threats to its own security. Still, there are many lessons which thirty years of 'Troubles' can teach us. Part of what brought the worst of Ireland's violence to an end was the recognition of some of the root causes of that violence. Thus, a good part of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement did deal with human rights issues, cultural issues, policing and justice, etc. Though clearly this is not enough

for 'dissident' republican ideologues, making a greater effort to tackle poverty and social exclusion would go a long way towards creating a more peaceful Northern Ireland.

Speaking about combating 'terror' in general, academic Richard English notes that government's should 'avoid the over-militarisation of response'.[44] Though he argues that there may be some role for the military (citing Northern Ireland), one could just as easily point to Ireland and see how the military exacerbated what was already a difficult situation. When it was confirmed that Sir Hugh Orde had asked for Britain's Special Reconnaissance Regiment to help in combating 'dissident' violence, Nationalist politicians had good reason to question his decision.[45] The history of similar elite, undercover army units in the North has been highly controversial, resulted in a number of disputed killings and has further alienated he minority community from the British state.

Another important lesson Northern Ireland's 'Troubles' might teach us today is the importance of adhering to the rule of law. 'The legacy of shoot-to-kill controversies, for example, has been largely damaging to the UK authorities in Northern Ireland, as has the long-term damage done by the boundary-stepping British Army activity in early-1970s Ulster'.[46] While much has changed since the signing of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, serious concerns have, for example, been raised about the recruitment and use of informers. As recently as 2010, the Police Ombudsman was asked to investigate claims that the PSNI pressured a Belfast teen to plant weapons on a neighbour's property.[47] While good intelligence is vital to counter-terror/counter-insurgency operations, the security services need to be held to account for their activities and vulnerable young people need greater protection.

Perhaps the most important response to on-going 'dissident' violence in Northern Ireland 'is to maintain strong credibility in counter-terrorist public argument'.[48] This is how English closes his most recent book and, again, he draws on his expertise on Ireland to illustrate the point. Obviously a State should see the importance in this but here – in the context of Northern Ireland – this is complicated by the divided loyalties held by the North's unionist and nationalist communities.

'Dissident' republicans are unlikely to reconcile themselves to a Northern Ireland which is part of a United Kingdom, irrespective of concrete advances in the 'equality agenda,' policing reform, human rights, etc. Moreover, they care little of Sinn Féin's very real electoral success in the post-Agreement era. Yet those still wedded to the physical force

tradition – i.e. 'armed struggle – might actually listen to those like-minded 'dissidents' who oppose the use of political violence.

Not all 'dissident' republicans have a 'private army, [nor do they] call for a return to armed struggle'.[49] Soon after the fatal shootings at Massereene and Craigavon, the Republican Network for Unity – a 'dissident' group formed in early 2007 – published a position paper on 'armed struggle'. While the group acknowledged that it 'included many shades of republican opinion regarding armed struggle'.[50] It noted that:

> Embarking on an armed campaign comes with many burdens and risks both to the volunteers involved and the communities from which they come. Such a campaign requires a far-reaching strategy, material resources, logistics, and effective PR that communicates and gives guidance to the community. Those who drive such a campaign also have a duty to monitor the mood of the people, assess conditions within the community and be able to organise to meet the needs of the community.[51]

Such views certainly differentiate the RNU from present-day supporters of, for example, the Continuity IRA or the Real IRA.[52]

For the most part, the Republican Network for Unity is a group made up of former combatants and, not surprisingly, it has admitted that it has 'no objection in principle to organised and disciplined resistance against British rule in Ireland'.[53] While such sentiments would not endear them to those outside the republican community, the position paper does caution those republicans who still advocate the use of force. It urges such actors to give pause and think.

At about the same time that the RNU published its position paper, 'Èirigí', another so-called 'dissident' formation, issued a statement. The republican socialist group reiterated that it still believed 'that the creation of [. . .] a popular movement represents the best potential to create the conditions which will make British rule and capitalist exploitation in Ireland untenable'.[54] To this end, they rejected both the politics of Sinn Féin and of republican militarists. 'As much as our enemies may wish that republicans have only two options to choose from – that of accepting Stormont or that of a renewed armed campaign – we in 'Èirígí' are determined to offer another option for those who wish to see an end to British rule'.[55]

Before the end of 2009, the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) – an organisation with a slightly different lineage than other 'dissident' groupings – announced that its armed wing had officially called an end to

its armed campaign.[56] In a statement from the leadership of the movement it was said that 'the armed struggle is over and the objective of a 32 County Socialist Republic will be best achieved through exclusively peaceful political struggle'.[57] The Irish National Liberation Army (INLA), which had called a complete ceasefire in 1998, would now decommission its arsenal and stand down. At a time when 'new' paramilitary organisations were forming, this was (and is) good news.

A Farewell to Arms?

One of the many reasons why the Irish peace process has been celebrated – indeed, it has been 'celebrated as an example to the rest of the world' – is simply 'because it is a rare beast; most peace accords fail'.[58] In fact, since the early 1970's many different Irish peace accords and initiatives did fail. Ireland's 'Troubles,' were once regarded as one of the world's many 'intractable' conflicts. The fact that some sort of accommodation was eventually reached in what was, and still is, a very deeply divided society is an impressive achievement by any standard. Yet many questions remain unresolved and, rather than an example of conflict resolution, Ireland offers an example of conflict management.

Militant republicans have been challenging the status quo on the island of Ireland for generations. While such challenges do not always mean taking up arms, often times they do. The actions of the State or of former comrades in trying to 'silence' such activity is understandable, it may even yield results. Both parties have vested interests in preserving of pursuing their stated goals. Ultimately, however, if one wants to see an end to the armed actions of 'dissident' republicans, it will probably be the arguments of republicanisms intellectual or political 'dissidents' that will win the day. The question remains, however, can these forces meet the challenge?

Notes and References

1 David McKittrick, 'If we are at peace, why are soldiers still dying?', *The Independent,* 9 March 2009.
2 'British occupation forces killed in Six-County attacks', *Saoirse,* April 2009.

3 Citing in the burning of Bombay Street (August 1969) and attacks on other nationalist areas, Robert Kerr notes: 'It was the Provisionals, initially poorly armed, who came to the defence of the community. The Phoenix arising out of the flames came to symbolise them, as did the slogan "Out of the ashes of '69 arose the Provisionals"', Robert Kerr, *Republican Belfast: a Political Tourist Guide* (Belfast: MSF Press, 2008) 34.

4 The Second Dáil was the last democratically elected, all-Ireland parliament prior to the partition of Ireland. For doctrinaire republicans, this revolutionary body represents the last legitimate government authority on the island.

5 'Of the year's deaths 280 were the result of republican activity [235 were directly attributed to the Provisional IRA]. Loyalists were behind 121 while the army was responsible for 79 deaths and the RUC for six'. David McKittrick, Seamus Kelters, Brian Feeney, Chris Thornton and David McVea, *Lost Lives* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2004 edition) 138, 1527.

6 McGuinness, quoted in Richard English, *Armed Struggle* (London: Macmillan, 2003) 245 (originally published in *AP/RN*, 28 June 1984).

7 McGuinness, quoted in Richard English, *Armed Struggle* (London: Macmillan, 2003) 245.

8 Gerry Adams, *The Politics of Irish Freedom* (Dingle: Brandon Books, 1986) 64.

9 The Teebane massacre (1/92) killed 8 civilians and was carried out by the IRA. The Warrington bombing (3/93) killed two young boys and was carried out by the IRA. And the Shankill bombing (10/93) killed nine civilians and was also carried out by the IRA. Both the Greysteel killings (10/93) and Loughinisland (6/94) were carried out by loyalist paramilitaries and killed 14 civilians between them.

10 John Bew, Martyn Frampton and Inigo Gurruchaga, *Talking to Terrorists* (London: C. Hurst, 2009) 246.

11 Gerry Adams, 'It's time to stop', web, 9 April 2011, <http://leargas.blogspot.com/2011/04/its-time-to-stop.html>.

12 In the wake of the attack on Massereene Army Barracks, BBC News began to include a link on its website under the heading of 'Who are the dissidents?'. This became a regular feature when reporting on 'dissident' republican violence. See 'Real IRA was behind army attack,' web, 8 March 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/7930995.stm>.

13 The Republican Movement split into two factions at the start of the 'Troubles': the Officials and the Provisionals.

14 Traditionally, republicans refused to accept the legitimacy of the Dublin government and therefore pledged not to take their seats in Dáil Éireann should they be elected.

15 Anthony McIntyre, 'Of Micro Ministers and Mimic Men', *Forthwrite*, Summer 2008.

16 Dissenting voices in the media also came under pressure. It was claimed that 'reporters and editors sympathetic to Sinn Fein's strategy called [. . .] [those] who asked awkward questions "Japps – Journalists Against the Peace Process"'.

'Reporters 'covered up truth' about IRA to help peace', *The Guardian*, 17 September 2006.

17 Nor is it the political or intellectual 'dissidents' who receive much media attention – a point not lost on those who still engage in 'armed struggle'.

18 'Threat from dissident republicans in Ulster "highest for seven years"', *The Guardian*, 6 March 2009.

19 Quoted in Robert White, *Ruairí Ó Brádaigh* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2006) 327. See also, ''Revolutionary' IRA Emerges', *Saoirse*, February 1996. Not surprisingly, there is a long history of groups claiming to be the 'true Óglaigh na hÉireann' or 'Irish Republican Army'.

20 It should be noted that the PIRA called off their 1994 ceasefire in February 1996. It was reinstated in July the following year.

21 '1250lb bomb wrecks Enniskillen hotel', *Saoirse*, August 1996.

22 'British occupation forces killed in Six-County attacks', *Saoirse*, April 2009.

23 McKevitt is also the common-law husband of Bernadette Sands-McKevitt, sister of IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands.

24 Derry 32 County Sovereignty Movement, 'The 32csm – background', web, 27 November 2011, <http://www.derry32csm.com/#!/p/32csm-background.html>.

25 Independent Monitoring Commission, *Twenty-Fifth Report of the Independent Monitoring Commission* (London: the Stationary Office, 2010) 13 <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/hc1011/hc05/0565/0565.pdf.>.

26 Martyn Frampton, *Legion of the Rearguard* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2011) 258.

27 For example, see 'Oglaigh na hEireann profile: police issued with bomb mirrors to counter splinter group', *The Telegraph*, 4 April 2011.

28 'Former Provos claim Kerr murder and vow more attacks', *Belfast Telegraph*, 22 April 2011.

29 'Dissidents will feed on division and frustration', *Irish News*, 6 April 2011.

30 By 'unionist veto' , republicans mean that the pro-union community in the North has been given a veto on Irish unity because they have been given assurances from Britain that such unity can only come about if the majority in the North opt for it. Republicans, however, believe that such a decision should be made by the people of Ireland and not those just in the North. Accepting the so-called 'unionist veto' means accepting the Northern statelet.

31 'We'll have a united Ireland by 2016, says McGuinness', *The Irish Independent*, 18 November 2003.

32 'Dissidents will feed on division and frustration', *Irish News*, 6 April 2011.

33 32 County Sovereignty Movement Fermanagh, 'IRA Easter Statement 2011', web, 25 April 2011, <http://32csmfermanagh.blogspot.com/2011/04/ira-easter-statement-2011.html>.

34 'Dissidents: interview with terror splinter group', *The Belfast Telegraph*, 3 November 2010.

35 After the fatal shootings at Massereene Barracks and the gunning down of Constable Stephen Carroll, former IRA man (and Deputy First Minister) Martin McGuinness went a step further and branded those who carried out such attacks as 'traitors to Ireland' ('Hardliners vent their fury at Martin McGuinness', *The Guardian*, 14 March 2009.)
36 'Poverty is the backdrop to the riots in Northern Ireland', *The Guardian*, 14 July 2010.
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